

information or failure to cooperate is a violation of this part.

(d) *Determination.* As a result of its review of the recipient, the Departmental element civil rights staff makes one of the following determinations:

(1) The recipient is in compliance with its MBE obligations; or

(2) There is reasonable cause to believe that the recipient is not in compliance with its MBE obligations in certain specified respects. Proceedings shall be begun in accordance with § 23.81 and, if necessary, § 23.83.

**§ 23.81 Conciliation procedures for financial assistance programs.**

(a) *Reasonable cause notice.* Whenever the responsible office of civil rights makes a determination of reasonable cause to believe that a recipient is in noncompliance, a notice is sent promptly and in writing by registered mail, return receipt requested, describing the areas of noncompliance requiring the applicant or recipient to show cause within 30 days why enforcement proceedings or other appropriate action to ensure compliance should not be instituted and offering the recipient an opportunity to conciliate. The responsible office of civil rights shall pursue conciliation efforts for at least 30 days from the date of the reasonable cause notice.

(1) *Successful conciliation.* If a conciliation agreement is signed by the Departmental element's office of civil rights and recipient, it is approved or disapproved by the head of the Departmental element within 20 days of receiving it. If the head of the Departmental element disapproves the agreement, the reasons therefor are stated in writing. The head of the Departmental element may propose amendments to the agreement which are forwarded to the recipient, requesting the recipient's acceptance or rejection of the amended agreement within 20 days of receipt.

(2) *Unsuccessful conciliation.* If no agreement is signed within 120 days of the notice of reasonable cause enforcement proceedings set forth in § 23.83 begin. The head of the responsible office of civil rights, upon a written determination that an additional 30 days

are needed to complete conciliation, may extend the conciliation period for 30 days. Subsequent extensions may be made upon such written determinations. The determinations shall include reasons for the extension and shall be provided to the complainant and respondent.

(b) *Effect of conciliation agreement.* If a conciliation agreement is approved, the existence of the determination of noncompliance does not act as a bar to the provision of financial assistance as long as the terms of the agreement are fulfilled. A compliance review is conducted by the Department element within nine months of the approval of an agreement.

**§ 23.83 Enforcement proceedings for financial assistance programs.**

(a) Whenever conciliation efforts pursuant to § 23.81 are unsuccessful, enforcement proceedings begin. These proceedings are conducted in accordance with the Department's procedures for enforcing title VI (49 CFR part 21).

(b) A finding of noncompliance and the imposition of any sanction pursuant to these proceedings is binding on all other Departmental elements. Sanctions are limited to the recipient with respect to whom the noncompliance finding has been made and to the particular program or activity, or part thereof, in which noncompliance has been found.

**§ 23.85 Emergency enforcement procedure.**

(a) *General.* Whenever the Secretary determines that the conciliation and enforcement proceedings set forth in §§ 23.81 and 23.83 will not result in the timely and adequate enforcement of the provisions of this part, he/she initiates special enforcement procedures to obtain compliance.

(b) *Emergency reasonable cause notice.* A notice is sent, registered mail, return receipt requested, describing the areas of alleged noncompliance, setting forth the reasons why the normal course of conciliation and enforcement pursuant to §§ 23.81 and 23.83 will not result in timely and adequate enforcement, and requiring the recipient to show cause, within a specified period of time, generally not to exceed 15 days,